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The Communist World (b)(1)
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MOSCOW TEST-BAN TALKS

Khrushchev's decision to attend the 15 July opening of the talks on a nuclear test ban reflects the importance the USSR attaches to these negotiations. His decision was publicized on the eve of the talks after Moscow had made a series of gestures designed to create a favorable atmosphere for the Harriman-Hailsham mission. Since the talks began, Moscow has maintained strict secrecy on the details of the discussions. The Soviet press, however, has front-paged the brief daily communiqués noting the "favorable atmosphere" at the conference table.

Prior to the opening of the talks the Soviet press carried a spate of articles pegged to the negotiations. The tone of this press commentary was generally optimistic, although the authors issued the usual warnings about "certain circles," particularly in West Germany and the Pentagon, which seek to obstruct agreement.

In his 8 July talk with Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak, Khrushchev conveyed the impression to the former NATO secretary general that Moscow is not making agreement on a partial test ban contingent on the simultaneous signing of a NATO - Warsaw Pact nonaggression treaty. Spaak told the NATO Council on 12 July that while the Soviet leader mentioned a nonaggression treaty, "it did not seem to be of particular importance" to him. Spaak stated that although Khrushchev favored the

"idea," he was not as enthusiastic as Spaak had expected he would be.

Spaak further noted that the subject of disarmament was the "most positive part" of the conversation. According to Spaak, Khrushchev appeared to think it would be possible to conclude a partial test-ban agreement which excluded underground testing.

The impressions Spaak received appear to be supported by an article in the 13 July Moscow News, the Soviet English-language weekly. According to Ambassador Kohler, the article--by E. Fyodorov, a former member of the Soviet delegation to the US-UK-USSR talks on a test ban in Geneva--makes "clearer than any statement heretofore" that Moscow has dropped its previous insistence that a moratorium on underground testing accompany a partial test-ban accord and that Soviet leaders do not intend to insist on the simultaneous signing of a nonaggression pact and a partial test-ban agreement.

The US ambassador noted that Fyodorov focused on the test-ban issue and treated the nonaggression issue "casually" as another proposal which would "really make it possible to lessen international tension." Fyodorov argued that Khrushchev's 2 July proposal would ban "all tests which can be detected without the slightest doubt."

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